

Wilhelm Weitling — An Inventor of Prominence—A Remarkable Career.

WILHELM WEITLING, one of the original organizers and leaders of the co-operative trades-union movement, died in this City on Wednesday evening, 24th inst., in the sixty-third year of his age. He was born in the ancient and historical town of Magdeburg, Prussia, on the 5th of October, 1808. His parents were in humble circumstances, and at an early age he learned the tailor's trade, and for some time was employed in his father's shop. While thus engaged he found time to add to his previous common school education by constant reading in his spare hours. In this way he acquired the rudiments of the French and English languages. He was an active thinker, and was constantly planning improvements. The idea of co-operation seems to have been awakened in his mind at that time, from observing the many disadvantages that the poor mechanics and tradesmen labored under in their struggle against the power of capitalists and politicians. After devoting much thought to the matter he removed to Zurich, Switzerland, and without any capital of his own, started a co-operative society and a newspaper—both devoted to freedom and unity in trade, labor, and government.

He at once encountered the enmity of the authorities, who proclaimed him a seditious and dangerous person, and threatened terrible results if he and his associates did not desist from their schemes. The co-operators were unmoved, however, and held regular meetings as usual. While in the midst of one of these, at night, they were surprised by the Police and troops, who burst in the doors, broke up the meeting, and arrested all the members. At the same time the newspaper office was assailed, the presses destroyed, and the type thrown into the lake.

He was imprisoned for two years, and after having served that term, he reorganized the dispersed society. He then formed others successively at the Cities of Berlin and Hamburg. Again he suffered persecution. The Societies were compelled to meet secretly, and he was hunted for, but found secure refuge in a friendly house, where he remained hidden in a vault fourteen days. With Mr. CHARLES J.

MULLER (now in this City) and other exiles, he escaped under cover of a dark night to an American ship, and came to this country. At the outbreak of the revolution, in 1848, the two returned to Paris, joined the revolutionists, and rendered valuable service. In 1851 they returned to this country, and WEITLING started a German weekly newspaper called the *Republique der Arbeiter*.

Although he had no capital of his own, and relied upon a moderate co-operative aid of the societies he organized, his subscription list in a month's time reached 8,000. The *Staats Zeitung* then circulated but about 4,000 copies. As an editorial writer and manager he was remarkably successful, until some division among the societies caused disorganization and failure. He was also the leading spirit of a communist colony, which emigrated to Iowa, and finally failed.

For seven years he was Register at Castle Garden. He published two books: *Harmony and Freedom* and *The Gospel for Poor Sinners*, each of which ran through four editions. He received nine different patents for improvements to sewing-machines, among which were the double-stitch, button-hole and embroidery attachments now in general use. From these he never received any benefit. Another patent he had recently taken out for a dress-trimming crimper, upon which he had labored seventeen years. He leaves several other unfinished machines. An unpublished work on astronomy, advancing entirely new ideas as to the relative movements, position, &c., of the earth, sun, moon, and other celestial bodies, is pronounced by competent critics as interesting and worthy of commendation. He has always been a profound student in astronomy, and this manuscript is the fruit of fourteen years of mental toil. At 6 o'clock on Wednesday morning he was struck with paralysis, and died at 7 o'clock in the evening. The funeral will take place at 1 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, at his late residence, No. 178 Stanton-street, and it is probable that a large number of the co-operative societies that he founded will attend. He leaves a wife and six children, the eldest only fifteen years of age, in poor circumstances and entirely unprovided for.